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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN DEVELOPING NATIONS: AN ETHICAL & ECONOMIC CONUNDRUM

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The importance of sustainable development has been reiterated time and again, and yet most countries continue to keep environment and allied topics as a last priority. The current essay dwells upon the concept of sustainable development and its meaning to a developing country such as India, one which continues to be troubled with third world predicaments of poverty and population growth. The essay seeks to examine the viability of sustainable development for any nation. Secondly, it seeks to examine the inter-relation between wildlife conservation and sustainable development.

In light of the same, the essay puts particular emphasis on the problem of migratory birds in the State of Delhi-NCR while analysing the situation of the Okhla Bird Sanctuary caused by developmental projects. The major compartments in the paper have been dealt with in a composite manner to examine the International Scenario related to sustainable development, the Indian adoption of these principles in a specific scenario, and the dilemma of creating a sustainable environment in developing nations.

Keywords: Okhla Bird Sanctuary, Sustainable Development, Wildlife Conservation, Migratory Birds, Environment.

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[I.] SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: ANALYSIS OF CONCEPT & ALLIED LEGAL PROVISIONS

A. *Introduction*

With the accelerated pace of urban development, its impact on the environment has changed drastically. It has resulted in both 'natural resources' depletion and 'global environmental concerns'.¹ The '*Caring for the Earth: A strategy for Sustainable Living*' document defines "*sustainability*" as a characteristic or a state of being that can be maintained indefinitely, whereas "*development*" is defined as the increasing capability to meet human needs and to improve the quality of human life.²

The concept of sustainable development was introduced on the international platform with the release of the report '*Our Common Future*' by World Commission on Environment and Development i.e. the Brundtland Report in 1987.³ The Report defines sustainable development as "*development that meets the needs of present generation without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs.*"⁴ The concept of sustainable development gave a fresh perspective and rejected the notion that was set forth centuries ago, which claimed that development is an anti-thesis to conservation of the environment.⁵ Rather, sustainable development is based on the

¹ Richard E. Bilsborrow & Pamela F. DeLargy, *Land Use, Migration, and Natural Resource Deterioration: The Experience of Guatemala and the Sudan*, 16 POPUL. DEV. REV. 125 (1990).

² World Conservation Union et al., *Caring for Earth: A Strategy for Sustainable Living* 16, (International Union for Conservation of Nature, 1991).

³ Arvind Jasrotia, *Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development: Exploring the Dynamics of Ethics and Law*, 49 JIL 30 (2007).

⁴ Rep. of the World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future* 43, U.N. Doc. A/42/427 (1987).

⁵ Gurdip Singh & Amrita, *Sustainable Development: International and National*

premise that they are co-extensive or mutually inter-connected.⁶ Economic growth is a necessity to generate resources that will expedite the process of environment protection and protection of our resources is a factor for economic growth.⁷

The Rio Declaration was a reminder to the world about the importance of developing in a manner so as to "*equitably meet the developmental and environmental needs of the present and future generations*".⁸ In order to achieve sustainable development, the protection of the environment must constitute an integral part of the process of development and it cannot be isolated.⁹ The Rio Declaration was the genesis of Agenda 21 i.e. the agendas for the 21st Century and developed UN Commission on Sustainable development. Often, sustainability is misinterpreted as the goal that everyone strives for, however, sustainability does not represent any achievable final state but a fundamental characteristic of a dynamically developed system which is natural to all ecosystems. Sustainability is a permanent adaptation to changing conditions¹⁰.

The Rio Declaration has given the world certain crucial principles that are important to understand before moving on to the contention that this essay seeks to address. The first of them being '*Inter-Generational Equity*'¹¹ and the '*Polluter Pays Principle* (hereinafter:

Perspective, 1 RMLNUJ 31 (2008).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Gurdip Singh & Amrita, *Sustainable DeveloPMent: International and National Perspective*, 1 RMLNUJ 31 (2008).

⁸ U.N. Conference on Environment and DeveloPMent, Principle 3, *Rio Declaration on Environment and DeveloPMent*, U.N. Doc. A/C0NF.151/26/Rev. 1 (Vol. I), annex I (Aug. 12, 1992).

⁹ *Supra* note 8, at Principle 4.

¹⁰ Miroslav Rusko & Dana Prochazkova, *Solution to the Problems of the Sustainable DeveloPMent Management*, 19 SLOVAK UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY IN BRATISLAVA 77, 78 (2011).

¹¹ *Supra* note 8.

PPP'.¹² Like "Sustainable development" and the "Precautionary Principle", "Polluter Pays Principle" has also acquired the status of customary international law.¹³

B. Wildlife Conservation and Development

Forests have been an integral part of human existence since time immemorial and much has been written about forests and forestry, the way they should have been managed, the reasons for their depletion, the gravity of people's dependence on them, steps towards their regeneration, their rights, balancing industrial development with wildlife and so on.¹⁴

During the Mauryan period, 85% of land was covered by forests as compared to the present -day situation of only 23% amounting to 75 hectares of forest land.¹⁵ Out of this, only about 19.27% is under forest cover.¹⁶ In India, about 2/3rd of the total forest cover is spread across 137 tribal districts. Most of the marginalized sections of society are primarily dependent on these forests for their sustenance.¹⁷ Therefore, the recognition of the fact that forest resources and survival are inter-related has led to the legal and administrative regimes to aim for judicial utilization of forests and ensuring sustainability of their use.¹⁸

Protecting forests is essential for protecting wildlife.

¹² *Supra* note 8, at Principle 17.

¹³ *Supra* note 5.

¹⁴ Sanjay Upadhyay & Videh Upadhyay, *Forest Laws, Wildlife Laws And The Environment* 3 (1st Ed., Lexisnexis Butterworth, 2002).

¹⁵ WR Bentely, GB Singh & N Chatterjee, *Tenure and Agroforestry Potentials in India* (9 papers presented at the International Workshop on Tenurial Issues in AgroForestry, New Delhi, 1988), *Village Voices, Forest Choices* (Oxford University Press, 1988).

¹⁶ Ministry of Environment and Forest, *Annual Report of Ministry of Environment and Forest of India, 1997-98* (last visited May 05, 2020 14:00 IST), <http://moef.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/report/9798/intro.html>

¹⁷ *Supra* note 14, at 4-5.

¹⁸ *Id.*

Fragmentation and destruction of habitat have been the two most prominent causes that have negatively affected the conservation of wildlife in India.¹⁹ There has been a growing concern globally regarding the threat to the wild species of flora and fauna. Numerous international documents have been signed to protect species worldwide, those ranging from protecting migratory species²⁰ to illicit trade of wildlife, and its products²¹ to protecting specific species.²² Wildlife is one of our basic and natural resources that satisfies the needs or wants of the civilization, and therefore it is essential that it must be conserved and protected for the existence of mankind.²³

The importance of the same has been observed aptly by the Planning Commission in its 6th five-year plan as well.²⁴ In the famous *Silent Valley Case*²⁵, the importance of protection and conservation of rich and unique heritage of rare and valuable flora and fauna for the benefit of the nation and posterity including, endangered species like lion-tailed monkey as they are national assets, was reiterated.

In *Tarun Bharat Sangh, Alwar v. Union of India*²⁶, The Supreme Court emphasized the importance of wildlife and vis-à-vis environment and declared that, "*this litigation should not be treated as the usual adversarial litigation. Petitioners are acting in aid of a purpose on natural agenda.*" Importantly, the court recognized that the concern for wildlife must be shared by the Central Government.

¹⁹Sanjay Upadhyay & Videh Upadhyay, Forest laws, Wildlife laws and the Environment 220 (1st ed. Lexisnexus butterworth, 2002).

²⁰ Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, Nov. 6 1979, 1651 UNTS 356.

²¹ Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna, Mar. 3 1973, 993 UNTS 243.

²² International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, Dec. 2 1946, 161 UNTS 74.

²³ SC Shastri, Environmental Law 255 (1st ed., Eastern Book Company, 2002).

²⁴ Planning Commission, 6th Five Year plan 1980-85 343 (Govt. of India, 1981).

²⁵Silent Valley v. Union of India, (1979) (SC) O.P. Nos. 2949 and 3025 (India).

²⁶ Tarun Bharat Sangh, Alwar v. Union of India ,1992 Supp (2) SCC 448 (India).

C. International Laws on Protection of Species

In the backdrop of the Stockholm Declaration, the importance of conservation of wildlife and natural resources was brought to the forefront. It is clear that each nation is sovereign to use its natural resources as it may please and pursuant to its own policies.²⁷ There are two theories on protection of wildlife: protectionist or “locked up” policy; and declaring habitats or eco-systems as reserved.²⁸

The conventions that are going to be discussed adopt a typical methodology while aiming at conservation of species. They identify species and suggest the degree of threat and protection required.

- 1) Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES)
- 2) Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, Bonn 1979
- 3) Other International Agreements

UNCLOS III vests sovereign rights in the coastal states for ‘exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing natural resources, whether living or non-living’²⁹ It is pertinent to note that UNCLOS III lists five categories of species with the objective of ensuring conservation.³⁰ The convention calls for active participation and participation of all states in limiting and regulating exploitation of species.³¹

Apart from various conventions with a focus on protection of species, there have been multiple attempts on the global level on

²⁷ *Supra* note 8, at Principle 21.

²⁸ William F. Brady, *Wildlife in the Third World: Current Efforts to Integrate Conservation with Development*, 5 B. C. THIRD WORLD L. J. 83 (1984).

²⁹ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Art. 56 (1) (a), Dec. 10 1982, 1822 UNTS 397.

³⁰ *Id.*, at Art. 64.

³¹ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Dec. 10 1982, 1822 UNTS 397.

protection of habitats. The relevant one is Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (especially as waterfowl habitat), Ramsar 1971. The convention seeks to preserve the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands as regulators of water regimes and as habitats supporting a characteristic flora and fauna.³²

D. Indian Provisions On Conservation Of Wildlife

The Constitution of India, under Art. 48-A³³, has provided that "*the State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forest and wildlife of the country*". Article 51-A (g)³⁴ further provides that protection and improvement of the natural environment shall be duty of every citizen.

Further, List III of Schedule VII provides entries under which the Centre and State both can make laws, such as forests³⁵ and protection of wildlife³⁶. List II of Schedule VII casts the duty on the state to make laws to '*preserve, protect and improve the livestock and prevent animal diseases....*'³⁷ and on 'Fisheries'.³⁸

In exercise of the above powers, the Parliament of India has passed the following major acts to protect, preserve and improve wildlife:

(1) Wildlife Protection Act, 1972³⁹

³² Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Especially as Waterfowl Habitat), Feb. 2, 1971, 996 UNTS 245.

³³ India Const. art. 48-A, amended by The Constitution (Forty Second Amendment) Act, 1976.

³⁴ India Const. art. 51-A (g), amended by The Constitution (Forty Second Amendment) Act, 1976.

³⁵ India Const. Schedule VII, Entry 17-A, amended by The Constitution (Forty Second Amendment) Act, 1976.

³⁶ India Const. Schedule VII, Entry 17-B, amended by The Constitution (Forty Second Amendment) Act, 1976.

³⁷ India Const. Schedule VII, Entry 15.

³⁸ India Const. Schedule VII, Entry 21.

³⁹ Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, No. 53, Acts of Parliament, 1972 (India).

(2) Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960⁴⁰

Before passing the above-mentioned acts, there were other acts in existence that protected wildlife. The Indian Penal Code, 1860 defines animal and declares killing them as a punishable offence.⁴¹ The Cattle Trespass Act, 1871 and the Elephants Preservation Act, 1879 were the earliest laws dealing with wildlife. The India Forest Act, 1927 also included certain provisions restricting hunting and protected forests and national sanctuaries.

[II.] OKHLA BIRD SANCTUARY: A CASE STUDY OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA AND ITS CHALLENGES

A. Case Study Area

Delhi, the capital city of India lies between 28.380 N and 77.120 E in latitude and longitude respectively. The River Yamuna, a major tributary of the Ganges, is one of the key natural infrastructures of Delhi city. The total length of the river in the city is 50 km between its entry at Palla and exit at Jaitpur. Its floodplains extend to an area of 94.84 km⁴² comprising forests, agriculture land, settlements and lakes/ponds and can hold about 2 billion cubic meters of water. The maximum width of the active floodplain is observed near 'Okhla' where a large quantum of water is brought through 'Hindun' cut. Despite high urban stress, the floral diversity of the floodplains includes 74 species of macrophytes and 90 species of phytoplankton, whereas the faunal diversity constitutes of 62 species of

⁴⁰ Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, No. 59, Acts of Parliament, 1960 (India).

⁴¹ Indian Penal Code, 1860 S. 429, No. 45, Acts of Parliament 1860 (India).

⁴² Gupta Anil et al., *Urban Resilience and Sustainability Through Peri-urban Ecosystems: Integrating CCA and DRR*, Indian Environmental Portal, <http://www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/files/file/UrbanResilienceandSustainabilityPeriurbanEcosystems.pdf>. (last visited May 05, 2020 14:10 IST).

zooplankton, 55 species of benthos, 36 fish species and 131 bird species.⁴³

B. Importance

The Okhla Bird Sanctuary is situated at the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh Border, and is known for its variety of migratory and resident birds (about 324 species of 6000 birds have been listed during winters). Important birds visit the sanctuary, including different species of Cormorants, Herons, Egrets, Darter, Coots, Ducks, etc.⁴⁴ The diversity of birds that it harbours is highly appreciated and preserved by avid bird watchers.⁴⁵ However, in recent times, developmental projects have jeopardised environmental goals and have led to a downfall of migratory birds that used to visit the Okhla Bird Sanctuary.⁴⁶

According to the figures cited by Centre for Environmental Research and Development (CERD):

- *324 bird species are reported from Okhla.*
- *Out of this, about 50% are migratory birds and 36% are resident birds. Others are vagrant sightings or of unknown category.*
- *40% of the total birds are common locally and the rest are uncommon or rare. Out of these, there are 20 common resident water bird species, 44 common resident woodland species, 43 migratory water bird species and 26 migratory woodland bird species.*

⁴³ *Id.*

⁴⁴Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, 2014, Notification S.O. 2499(E) (India).

⁴⁵ Srestha Banerjee, *Okhla bird sanctuary in danger*, DOWN TO EARTH, (July 04, 2015), <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/okhla-bird-sanctuary-in-danger-39966> (last visited May 05, 2020 14:30 IST).

⁴⁶ *Id.*

- The total bird list includes two 'Critically Endangered', nine 'Vulnerable', seven 'Near Threatened' and one 'Conservation Dependent' species.
- About 10 species of mammals include Nilgai, Indian mongoose, Black-naped hare, jackals, 8 species of reptiles and 2 species of amphibians." ⁴⁷.

Given the rich diversity, it is necessary to conserve and protect the area around the sanctuary, and to propagate improvement of, and develop the different species of birds therein and its environment.⁴⁸

C. Legal Provisions Involved

- 1) By virtue of a notification issued by the Government of Uttar Pradesh on 8.05.1990, the state has declared Okhla Bird Sanctuary as a "protected area"⁴⁹ under Section 18 and 26(A) of the Wildlife (Protection Act, 1972).⁵⁰
- 2) Ministry of Environment and Forest issued a notification on 9.02.2011, in which the Government declared the area around the national parks and wildlife sanctuaries as "eco-sensitive zone". (An eco-sensitive zone is to be maintained beyond the "protected area" which is to the extent of 10 Km)⁵¹

⁴⁷ Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, *Environmental Impact Assessment and Environment Management Plan Kalindi Kunj - Botanical Garden Corridor*, CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT 44 (October 2014), <http://www.delhimetrorail.com/otherdocuments/EIAbkcorridor.pdf>. (last visited May 05, 2020 15:00 IST).

⁴⁸Supra note 45.

⁴⁹ Amit Kumar v. Union of India & Ors., (2013) M.A. No. 890/2013, M.A. No. 904/2013, M.A. No. 906/2013 (NGT, Delhi) (India).

⁵⁰ Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 Section 18 & 26(A), No. 53, Acts of Parliament, 1972 (India).

⁵¹ Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, 2015, Notification S.O. 2262(E) (India).

- 3) Under Section 5C (1) of the Wild Life Protection Act, 1972, it is the duty of the National Board for Wildlife to promote considerable development of wildlife and forest, which includes the protection of the area surrounding the sanctuaries.⁵²
- 4) Wildlife Conservation Strategy of 2002 categorically stated that lands falling within the 10 km radius of the boundaries of the National Park/Wildlife Sanctuaries should be notified as under Eco Fragile Zone under Section 3(v) Environmental Protection Act.⁵³ It is also stated that Addl. Director General of Forest (Wildlife), in a letter dated 06.02.2002, requested all the States to list the areas which fall within 10 Km radius of the boundaries of the National Park/Wildlife Sanctuaries as 'Eco Fragile Zone'.⁵⁴

D. Issues Faced

The Okhla Bird Sanctuary today is faced with multiple issues due to two major reasons:

- i. Unauthorised construction
- ii. Government neglect and inaction

This can be mainly credited to Delhi NCR's hunger for land that is causing disappearance of important natural areas with no steps to restore it.⁵⁵ With each passing year, the number of migratory birds

⁵² Wild Life Protection Act, 1972, Section 5C (1), No. 53, Acts of Parliament, 1972 (India).

⁵³ Environmental Protection Act, 1986, Section 3(v), No. 29, Acts of Parliament, 1986 (India).

⁵⁴ *Supra* note 50.

⁵⁵ K.S. Gopi Sundar, *Enlightened Citizens Move to Restore Okhla Bird Sanctuary, Panda, WWF-INDIA NEWSLETTER (September, 2005)*, http://assets.wwfindia.org/downloads/september_newsletter.pdf. (last visited May 6, 2020 16:15 IST).

visiting Okhla Bird Sanctuary is decreasing in number due to construction work in New Okhla Industrial Development Area (NOIDA).⁵⁶ Despite the same, the sanctuary is facing Governmental neglect.⁵⁷

The Government of Uttar Pradesh had notified Okhla Bird Sanctuary as a “eco-sensitive zone”, meaning no construction work should have occurred within 10 kms of the sanctuary.⁵⁸ In an interim order of October, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) said that “all constructions within 10 km radius of the Okhla Bird Sanctuary or within distance of eco-sensitive zone, as may be prescribed by the notification issued by Ministry of Environment and Forests, shall be subject to the decision of the NBWL”.⁵⁹ The Government is now, in an attempt to circumvent its own notification, reducing the 10 km distance to 1.27 km on northern boundary of the sanctuary and 100 m on all other boundaries.⁶⁰

The Centre has now legitimised the construction work for which approval should never have been given at the first instance. It is pertinent to note that there are no projects on the northern side. Hence, the 1km distance is a façade, rather the intent is to let development happen just 100 metres across the sanctuary.

The repercussions of such illegal construction and neglect may be summarised in the following points:

⁵⁶ Shagun Kapil, *Where have the birds gone*, DECCAN HERALD (Jan 17, 2016), <https://www.deccanherald.com/content/523534/where-have-birds-gone.html> (last visited May 6, 2020 02:03 IST).

⁵⁷ *Supra* note 50.

⁵⁸ *Supra* note 52.

⁵⁹ *Supra* note 50.

⁶⁰ Akanksha Jain, *Move on eco-sensitive zone around Okhla Bird Sanctuary irks activists*, THE HINDU (29 March, 2016) <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/move-on-ecosensitive-zone-around-okhla-bird-sanctuary-irks-activists/article7559286.ece> (last visited May 6, 2020 10:00 IST).

- i. Interference in navigation by birds flying in and out of the sanctuary due to the high-rise buildings.
- ii. Less hospitable environments for the birds due to such structures, which includes- obstruction of view, flight path, and creation of distractions because of lights.⁶¹
- iii. Risk of 'electromagnetic radiation hazards' due to cellular towers.⁶²
- iv. Construction work leads to pollution, and the developmental projects add to their degrading situation.⁶³

E. Suggestions

In order to deal with the issues that have cropped up in the Okhla Bird Sanctuary at the cost of "development", multiple steps need to be taken to ensure sustainable development is still a reality. Some of the proposed suggestions may be listed as follows:

- 1) The Court must direct an exact area to be left untouched outside "eco-sensitive zone" rather than leave it on the Government.
- 2) An amendment to this effect must be enacted under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 (Section 18).
- 3) The Courts must start fixing liability on Government officials that have provided licenses to unauthorised builders in NOIDA.

⁶¹Real Estate, *Will restricting buffer zone around Okhla Bird Sanctuary destroy the exotic birds?*

, HINDUSTAN TIMES (September 14, 2015), <https://www.hindustantimes.com/real-estate/will-restricting-buffer-zone-around-okhla-bird-sanctuary-destroy-the-exotic-birds/story-QH3mkpAsV8mBhShRem2JYN.html> (last visited May 6, 2020 11:00 IST).

⁶² *Supra* note 46.

⁶³ *Supra* note 62.

- 4) The Courts must fix Corporate Criminal Liability on the human agency of the companies undertaking such work illegally.
- 5) These migratory birds must be given a legal status and their protection be considered of paramount importance.
- 6) Infrastructural developmental projects wherein Environmental Impact Assessment recognises the needs of birds must be done simultaneously.

[III.] SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT VIS-À-VIS ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT: ROADBLOCKS

In the era of neo-colonialism and shift of the world power epicentre to the third world nations, economic prowess has become more necessary than ever. The world economy has major players in the form of developing nations, who constantly strive to reach a higher growth level, and this inevitably forms roadblocks with our idea of a sustainable environment.

To analyse the matter briefly, the key points⁶⁴ of a forking in the paths of environment-friendly sustainable environment and development are:

- i. Food Security

Despite a dramatic increase in world production of crops today, adoption of methods such as overuse of chemical fertilisers and pesticides, over-irrigation, use of high-yielding variety (HYV) seeds

⁶⁴ Macleod H., *Teaching for Ecologically Sustainable Development*, AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION (1992), https://archive.org/stream/ERIC_ED380319/ERIC_ED380319_djvu.txt (last visited May 6, 2020 13:00 IST).

have led to soil and water pollution, biological magnification of such chemicals in food chains, salinization and alkalisation of soils respectively.

ii. Urbanisation

With over 50% of the world's population residing in urban communities and city populations quadrupling in the past 30 years, urbanisation has led to poor housing and environment conditions. A low living standard extracted from lower wages and higher expenditure requirements in such cities is a continuous strain on the environment and its resources.

iii. Global Energy Consumption

The increasing dependence on energy consumption has resulted in four major issues: the greenhouse effect, acidification and air pollution, depletion of resources and increased natural calamities.

iv. Industrialisation

Industrialisation, despite being a major factor for economic growth, is a humongous contributor to escalation of pollution levels. Further, the limited ability of developing nations to deal with problems such as disposal of hazardous waste due to factors such as cost and technological inequalities between countries adds to the unsolved conflict.

The major hindrances to achieving a sustainable environment in a developing nation may be summarised as:

i. Lack of adequate financial resources.

- ii. Lack of adequate infrastructure and technological prowess.
- iii. Governmental conflict between short-term profit and long-term investment in sustainable development plans.
- iv. Red-tapism, bureaucracy and Corruption.
- v. Lack of awareness of responsibilities and Sustainable Development Goals.

In the Indian context, the problem comes into picture since India's priorities are to provide housing, food and nutritional security, affordable health services and basic living standards to its large population. Apart from conventional development programs, India has also undertaken plans to set up smart cities, and other large infrastructure projects.

All these actions will potentially weaken India's global position on responses to climate change. The current political situation in India has allowed it to go down the path of growth without compromising its commitment to global action on climate change and carbon emission. Thus, despite several challenges, India has ratified the Paris Agreement on Climate Action. However, the constant tug of war between developmental actions and environmental concerns remains.

[IV.] CONCLUSION

We stand today at a crossroad. While it is apparent that developed nations are the ones responsible for this situation, developing nations have been left today to act responsibly and find solutions to come out of this dilemma of sustainable development.

India is no exception to this conundrum. While India's immediate priority is to provide livelihoods and employment to its

population, its long-term goals are also to create sustainable economic opportunities at both- micro & macro – levels to keep its promises to take the GDP growth of the country to an ambitious double-digit target of 10 percent.

The realisation of a greater social and environmental responsibility is imperative. Sustainable Development is the safest bet for the world communities to deliver inclusive growth, eliminate poverty and reduce the risk of climate change by not only changing perspectives, but approaches to economic development as well.

Therefore, while well-thought out policies will make growth and climate objectives mutually reinforcing in the short and long term, businesses will be required to make investments in the drive to low carbon economy. And, we as individuals must understand the dire consequences of our actions, choices and expenditure. Global issues, after all, require global solutions.